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Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Minister attends aboriginal health summit in B.C. (06/11/30)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - Aboriginal leaders and politicians from across Canada were unanimous in their commitment to closing the existing health-care gap between First Nations and other Canadians within a decade.

The objective of the conference was to revisit many of the outstanding health issues that led to the Kelowna meetings in November 2005. Although not a continuation of Kelowna, the summit was an opportunity to reconnect and raise the priority of health issues among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across Canada.

Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Ed Doherty, who is also minister responsible for the aboriginal affairs secretariat, attended the summit on behalf of Premier Shawn Graham and the province.

"It is my hope that by working co-operatively we can gain a new perspective that will allow us to move forward on a number of important health issues facing First Nations," Doherty said. "In spite of the unique needs and circumstances of each jurisdiction, I believe that we can, and do, learn from each other."

A commitment was made to meet annually to share progress and ensure that the provinces are meeting their commitment to close the gaps. Manitoba Premier Gary Doer offered to host a second meeting in the fall of 2007.

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